

## How do I register to vote?

You need to fill out and submit a voter registration form. You may register in person at your local board of elections or at any state agency participating in the National Voter Registration Act, on any business day throughout the year. You may also register by mail. Forms are available from your county board of elections, town and city halls, post offices, political parties, various state offices, and the League of Women Voters. Contact the League of Women Voters of New York State – 1-866-LWVNYS1, the New York State Board of Elections – 1-800-FOR-VOTE, or your county board of elections to have a voter registration form sent to you. You may also download a voter registration form in New York State from [www.elections.ny.gov](http://www.elections.ny.gov). Complete, sign, and submit the form, either in person or by mail.

## If I register to vote, will I be called for jury duty?

The rolls of prospective jurors are compiled from a number of sources, so registering to vote does not necessarily mean that you will be called. Similarly, not registering to vote does not necessarily mean that you will not be called for jury duty. If you are called and feel that you cannot serve, jurors can often be temporarily or permanently excused for a valid health reason.

To obtain a voter registration form or absentee ballot application form, or to find out dates for the elections, for registering, for filing absentee ballot applications and submitting ballots:

- Call the NYS Board of Elections at 1-800-367-8683, or download the forms/calendar from the web site for the New York State Board of Elections [www.elections.ny.gov](http://www.elections.ny.gov).
- Call, write to, or download forms/calendar from the web site for your local county board of elections. You can get their contact information from the NYS Board of Elections.
- Call your local League of Women Voters, or the League of Women Voters of New York State at 518-465-4162 or toll free at 1-866-598-6971, or go to our web site at [www.lwvny.org](http://www.lwvny.org).

## To check your voter registration status:

You should receive in the mail before the election a card that informs you of your polling place. If you do not receive such a card, call your local board of elections and ask them:

1. Am I registered to vote?
2. Is my registration status "Active"? If not, what is it?
3. Will my name appear in the polling place roll book on Election Day?

## If you are not on the rolls at your polling place:

If you believe you are registered to vote and are not on the rolls, ask for an "affidavit" (paper) ballot, and ask the poll worker for advisement about following up on your status. You are legally entitled to an affidavit ballot and must be given one.

## Please Join Us

Membership is open to women and men. There are 48 local Leagues across NY state. Joining at any level automatically confers membership at every level: local, state and national. Membership enables you to support the League and receive publications from all three levels, and provides the opportunity to be involved in local, state and national issues.

Visit [www.lwvny.org](http://www.lwvny.org) and click on JOIN LWVNYS. To find a local League in your area, click on FIND A LOCAL LEAGUE.



## Did you know you are able to register as an organ and tissue donor when you register to vote?

In 2009, New York became the first state to include an organ and tissue donor enrollment section on voter registration forms. Since inception, more than a quarter-million individuals have joined the New York State Donate Life Registry this way.

Transplantation is a remarkable success story. One organ and tissue donor can save up to eight lives through organ donation, and heal seventy-five more lives through tissue donation by restoring eyesight, helping fight infections in burn patients, and preventing the loss of mobility and disability. However, the need for donated organs and tissues continues to grow. There are nearly 115,000 people in the U.S. waiting for organ transplants, and about 9,400 of those people are waiting right here in New York State. Sadly, each year, approximately 6,000 people in the U.S. die waiting for an organ transplant that would have given them a second chance at life with their families.

By enrolling in the New York State Donate Life Registry, you are giving legal consent to the donation of your organs and tissues in the event of your death. You are authorizing the State Department of Health and Donate Life New York State access to the information as needed for the administration of the Registry and to federally regulated organ procurement organizations, New York State licensed eye and tissue banks and entities formally approved by the Commissioner at or near the time of your death.

To learn more about organ, eye and tissue donation, visit [donatelife.ny.gov](http://donatelife.ny.gov).

League of Women Voters® of New York State  
62 Grand Street, Albany, NY 12207  
Phone (518) 465-4162 • Fax (518) 465-0812  
[www.lwvny.org](http://www.lwvny.org) • [lwvny@lwvny.org](mailto:lwvny@lwvny.org)

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

YOUR RIGHT TO

VOTE

IN NEW YORK STATE



## Individuals with Disabilities



This information is provided by  
the League of Women Voters of NYS  
and the New York State Bar Association  
[www.nysba.org](http://www.nysba.org) ~ [www.lwvny.org](http://www.lwvny.org)



## YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE IN NEW YORK STATE

# Individuals with Disabilities

Voting is an important part of being a U. S. citizen. The people who are elected this year will make decisions about things that directly affect your life, like your taxes, the education of your children and/or grandchildren, health plans, and changes in the laws of our state and nation. Voting is your chance to choose the decision makers and tell them what you want. To be eligible to vote in New York State, you must:

- be a United States citizen
- be 18 years old by the date of the general, primary or other election in which you want to vote
- live at your present address at least 30 days before an election
- not be incarcerated for a felony conviction
- not be on parole for a felony unless you are on parole and received a conditional voting restoration pardon, or have been issued a Certificate of Relief from Disabilities or Certificate of Good Conduct
- not be currently adjudged mentally incompetent or incapacitated by a court
- not claim the right to vote elsewhere
- have registered to vote

### Can I count on being able to vote at a local polling place if I am physically disabled?

Polling places in New York State are required to be accessible, but polling places may apply for and be granted an exemption from this requirement for various reasons.

### What can I do if I want to vote at a non-accessible polling place?

If you have been assigned to a polling place that is not accessible, you can apply to have your registration records moved to an accessible polling place that has the same ballot. You must apply at least two weeks before the election, and you may specify which polling place you wish to use. If there is no accessible polling place with the same ballot, the Board of Elections will treat your application for an accessible polling place as an application for an absentee ballot, and supply you with an absentee ballot.

### Can I vote if I can't get out to a polling place?

Yes, you can vote by absentee ballot. You must first obtain an application for an absentee ballot from the board of elections, fill it out, and mail it

in. You can call and ask them to send you an absentee ballot application or print it from their web site at [www.elections.ny.gov](http://www.elections.ny.gov). They will mail you your absentee ballot before the election.

### Do I have to apply for an absentee ballot every time I want to vote?

No. On the absentee ballot application, there is a box that you can check indicating that your disability or illness is permanent. If you check this box, once your application is approved, you will automatically receive a ballot for each election in which you are eligible to vote without having to apply again. The board of elections will maintain this information, until your registration is no longer valid (if you move from your address of record, for example).

### Will there be voting machines at the polling place that are accessible to people with various handicaps?

For the last two hundred years, individuals with a mobility impairment, learning disability and/or visual impairment could not vote independently and privately. Since the Fall, 2008 elections as part of New York State's implementation of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), there must be at least one ballot marking device (BMD) per polling place which will be accessible to individuals with disabilities. These devices enable individuals with disabilities who cannot mark a paper ballot to create a marked paper ballot for casting their vote on Election Day. Depending on your disability, there are different ways available to use the machines:

- For voters who cannot see or read the ballot text, an audio interface recites the ballot, including all contests and candidates, and allows the voter to make selections. It also verifies selections by reciting them back to the voter.
- For voters with some form of visual impairment, a key pad with Braille enables the voter to navigate through the ballot and record their vote. There is also the option to increase the font size of the ballot text.
- For voters who are unable to use a pen, or who are quadriplegic or paraplegic, a "sip and puff" device allows them to navigate the ballot and make their selections.
- For voters with limited manual dexterity, accessible "paddles," access pads, foot pads and buttons allow them to navigate the ballot and make selections.

In 2019, some NYS counties may purchase all-in-one voting systems which allow all voters to vote on the same system as

people with disabilities and have their votes tabulated on the same machine. Check with your County Board of Elections to see if your county has chosen new voting system.

### What if I don't speak English well?

Depending on the NYS county, some BMDs may have an option to select languages other than English. If you have limited English proficiency, you may bring someone with you to the polls to translate as long as it is not your employer, union representative, poll watcher, or candidate. The translator must take a formal oath and have their name entered into the Registration book.

### How do I vote using a ballot marking device (BMD)?

Here is the process that a person using a BMD to vote will follow at their polling place:

- The voter will check in at the registration desk and obtain a paper ballot (if not printed automatically by the machine).
- The voter will take the ballot to the ballot marking device, and will use the device to record their vote on the ballot. If requested, a bi-partisan team of poll workers can help in inserting the ballot and assisting the voter in accessing whatever aid or tool is needed.
- The voter will take the completed ballot to a secure deposit location to be counted later by the Board of Elections. If requested, a bi-partisan team of poll workers can insert the completed ballot in a privacy sleeve and take it to the deposit location.

If you wish, you may bring someone to the polls to help you, as long as it is not your employer, union representative, poll watcher, or candidate. Poll workers are also there to assist you, and are trained to do so, and will do so in a bipartisan manner fashion (both a Democrat and Republican will be there to assist you.) Be sure to communicate with them if you need help or the instructions are unclear. Make sure to tell the poll worker if: you are blind or visually impaired; you need the audio interface because you cannot read or see the ballot, or you speak a different language; you have no or limited use of your hands and need to use either the paddles or the "sip and puff" device. Poll workers can also assist a voter in inserting the blank ballot into the ballot marking device.

As of 2019, some counties may be purchasing and using an all-in-one voting system that allows voters with disabilities as well as all voters to vote on a machine similar to a Ballot Marking Device but which will also tabulate the votes. Check with your County Board of Elections. Poll workers will be there to help you on Election Day. Make sure however you vote, that your ballot reflects your votes accurately before you cast it and have it counted.

YOUR RIGHT TO



IN NEW YORK STATE